4: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1970 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

Telescoping of names, and fusion of names, taken together, can account for the fixity of the genealogy to a large extent. In addition, lines which showed every sign of normal development at one time, have petered out completely, even after they have sometimes assumed the status of tertiary segments. Conditions under which this is likely to happen are not difficult to envisage. If hearsay evidence is correct, disease, when it strikes in the desert, might rage in a camp like wild fire, bringing death to many, but not spreading to other camps, because the camps are so far apart. Even in springtime when men and beasts are together in the pastures, and the larger summer camp has split into four or five smaller ones, the distance between camps may still be a few miles. In summer, when camps are concentrated on the large watering points, the distances between them are considerably more. Disease, therefore, does not spread from camp to camp as rapidly as one might expect in such primitive conditions of living. In 1949 a number of men of a small camp died within a few days of each other. Bedouin opinion attributed these deaths to an allegedly false oath sworn by the deceased a year earlier. Medical opinion ascribed them to filth in a well which the deceased had been cleaning before their illness. In any event, a thriving line of a lineage was wiped off the genealogy. The portion of the Dawwas genealogy shown on this page shows a similar process at work. Again, to give another example, the Nasr section of the Magharba tribe once included six tertiary sections, not four as are now given. Two of these six sections are now represented by only four men of whom two are too old and decrepit to have heirs any longer, and are unmarried in any case; a third, whose wife has long passed child-bearing age, had two sons, but both died before marriage; and the fourth, a very poor and old man, has only one daughter, and is a widower. Three of the four now live with their collateral tribal section, Madhkur, and count themselves members of this group. That they once belonged to two different groups might have passed unnoticed were it not that two elders of the Madhkur section insisted that they should be correctly placed and their entire genealogies be recorded. The younger men argued that although they were aware that the two groups named Farjiani and al-Khadhar at one time